Sand, Gravel, and Stone

EPA Region 3
Maryland
Cecil County
3 miles west of Elkton

EPA ID# MDD980705164

1st Congressional District

Last Update: August 2002

Other Names:
Elkton Quarry
Maryland Sand and Gravel

Current Site Status

The collection and treatment of contaminated ground water at the site is continuing. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently announced its preferred cleanup plan for contaminated soils. EPA's final cleanup decision for contaminated soils at this site (Record of Decision) should be issued this year.

Site Description

The Sand, Gravel and Stone Site in Elkton, Maryland is a former sand and gravel quarry. From the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, the site was used for industrial-waste disposal. The site accepted distillation wastes from a local solvent recycler. The dumping prompted citizen complaints due to odors, which eventually lead to the end of disposal activities and a site investigation by state environmental officials. Preliminary studies showed that underground water close to the

land’s surface is heavily contaminated with a variety of organic chemicals. These water contaminants include benzene, chlorobenzene, and vinyl chloride. All local residents rely on underground water as a drinking water source. Two hundred thousand gallons of liquid waste were removed from the site in 1974. These wastes were disposed of at the Kin Buc Landfill in Edison, New Jersey. Drums and sludge that remained after this work in 1974 were buried onsite in excavated pits.

Site Responsibility

Cleanup of this site is the responsibility of the federal government and parties potentially responsible for the site contamination.

NPL Listing History

Our country’s most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites can be cleaned using federal money. To be eligible for federal cleanup money, a site must be put on the National Priorities List (NPL). This site was proposed for listing on December 30, 1982. The site was added to the NPL on September 8, 1983.

Threats and Contaminants

The shallow ground water is contaminated with several volatile organic compounds (VOCs), including benzene, chlorobenzene and trichloroethene, and some semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs). Soil and wastes are contaminated with VOCs, SVOCs, pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and heavy metals. The VOC contamination is by far the most widespread. SVOCs and metals were found in a much smaller volume of the soils that were tested. PCB and pesticide contamination is limited primarily to surface soils in a small area of the site.

High concentrations of VOCs are present in shallow on-site ground water. Although the shallow ground water is not being used for any purpose, contaminants have migrated into the underlying aquifer which is a source of water for local residents. Contaminated site soils present a significant continuing source of ground water contamination. Trespassers would be at risk due to ingestion or dermal contact with contaminated surface soils. Site access is restricted by a fence around the perimeter of the facility. Past fish

samples taken from downstream showed no sign of contamination.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html EXIT disclaimer

Cleanup Progress

EPA's decisions on how to address site contamination are formally outlined in legal documents known as Records of Decision (ROD). EPA signed its first ROD for this site in 1985. The selected remedy included fencing the site, excavating buried drums and taking them off-site for disposal, and installing a pump and treat system for the shallow underground water. In 1988, a group of 40 parties (Potentially Responsible Parties or PRPs) signed a legal document with EPA, agreeing to do this work. The fencing was completed in January 1989, and the excavation and removal of approximately 1,200 drums was completed in September 1992.

The ground water collection and treatment system has been operating for approximately six years. To date, about 70 million gallons of water have been treated.

EPA signed a second ROD in 1990. This one addressed deeper underground water and keeping it safe to drink. The ROD called for on-site and off-site ground water monitoring, with provisions for alternate water supplies if residential wells were found to be contaminated, and additional pumping if deeper onsite wells were found to be contaminated. Two more PRPs joined the group, raising its size to 42. These 42 parties signed another agreement with EPA (an Amendment to the 1998 Consent Decree), agreeing to do this work.

During the first few years of monitoring, one residential well was found to contain site-related contaminants; this well has been replaced with a deeper well. Contamination was recently detected in an on-site well that monitors the water layer (aquifer) directly below the contaminated shallow ground water bearing zone. The well where the contamination was found is being pumped so that the polluted water can be treated.

Contacts

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Detailed public files (Administrative Record) on EPA's involvement and decisions at this site can be examined at the following locations:

Cecil County Public Library
Elkton Branch
301 Newark Avenue
Elkton, MD 21921

U.S. EPA Region III
Public Reading Room
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-814-3157

Please call to schedule an appointment.